



## FINANCE COMMITTEE

Town of Grafton

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April 16, 2008

Public Meeting of the Finance Committee, 7:30 P.M.

Public Hearing of the Finance Committee, 8:00 P.M.

The public meeting of the Finance Committee was called to order at 7:30 P.M.

### **Finance Committee members present:**

Fred Churchill, Don Davison, Bob Foley (7:35 P.M.), Sandy Merrill, Doris Metivier, Gary Murray, Sue Robbins, Dave Ross (7:31 P.M.)

No Finance Committee members were absent.

Dave Ross is considering his term renewal.

Town Administrator Natalie Lashmit is present to review the warrant articles for the Annual Town Meeting.

### **Outstanding issues**

Fred Churchill wanted to speak about the \$628,000 deficit.

In principle, Joe Connors has agreed that the wages are included in that figure.

School Committee freeze on hiring? It will need to be defined.

Wages set aside will go into an article.

The Superintendent of Schools would like all of the funds for wages in his budget figure.

Fred Churchill noted that settlement funds usually are not funded prior to the agreement. Fred is guessing that the settlement will be lower than anticipated and the funds will create a higher budget for the future.

Doris Metivier stated that the school has always had their funds in the budget and has never had to come back to the town to ask for additional funding.

Don Davison stated that we can't trust the School Committee to do what is best for the Town.

Fred Churchill noted that they are asking for this money for salaries **only** in the amount of \$628,000.

The school contract for the teachers is usually a 3 year contract.

Why would you give the School funds for wages when the funds are more than what is needed?

Don Clark spoke regarding the municipal side.

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The Town Administrator or a representative should attend the School Committee negotiations according to the Education Reform Law.

**Agree to disagree.**

Spend x and return the remainder when the negotiations are completed.

**Open the public hearing**

Motion: Sue Robbins moved that the Finance Committee open the public hearing.

Seconded: Gary Murray. All in favor. Motion carries.

The public hearing opened at 8:00 P.M.

The Town Administrator is present to review the warrant articles for the Annual Town meeting.

**Capital budget plan dated April 15, 2008**

Follette Street Well—DEP. The town is questioning the state mandate.

Follow-up well testing needs to be done to meet compliance.

The Water District is supportive but no funds have come forward.

GASB compliance is late and infrastructure has not been taken care of.

This can affect the town's bond rating.

**Paul Vigneant, Co-Chair of Conservation**

Article 43: Correct deed to accept open space parcel—no maintenance needed. No additional funds to the Town.

Article 44: Annual reauthorization of the revolving fund.

Article 45: Amend Town's General Wetlands Protection By-Law

**Toma Duhani of the Department of Public Works**

Article 21: Drainage Easement

Article 22: Drainage Easement

Article 29: Standard, \$373,000 plus \$50,000 increase due to a list of town roads increase.

Article 35: Long Range Sidewalk, \$40,000 current

Article 36: Long Range Drainage, \$66,000 current

Special Town Meeting warrant will have articles for the Dams and the Snow and Ice deficit.

**Review of all articles with the Town Administrator**

Article 20

Everything in the Feasibility study is bondable?

There is no other source for funding if all is not bondable.

All user fees that are collected by the School Department do not need to be presented to the town via a warrant article.

The user fees must be used for that particular activity.

**Stabilization Fund**

It is not on the Annual Town Meeting warrant and it should be on the routine list fund.

What is to be asked of the Superintendent of Schools?

Fred Churchill suggested that whatever is not use be returned.

Doris Metivier will support the \$628,000 if the School Committee agrees.

It will be noted in the Grafton News as the Finance Committee recommendation that, once the negotiations are over, the remainder will go back.

Union contract will show the salary increases per year and take it from there.

Approved April 16, 2008 minutes of the Finance Committee

**School side of the budget for Article 6**

Motion: Fred Churchill moved that the Finance Committee supports the school budget in the amount of \$20,894,490, plus \$628,445 for the wages to be negotiated, to equal \$21,522,935, with the understanding that the School Department will return any portion of the \$628,445 that is not used for either contracts or funding the increase in the teacher and custodial union and non-union wages to free cash at the end FY09.

Seconded: Gary Murray. All in favor. Motion carries.

There was a discussion noting that Article 6 is set to go under two pieces.

The Board of Selectmen will have to meet to close and sign the Special Town Meeting warrant.

April 28, 2008 School Committee meeting

April 29, 2008 Board of Selectmen meeting

The Finance Committee stated that the municipal side should also return any portions of unused funds to free cash. The Town Administrator will be meeting with the Superintendent of Schools to explain this strategy.

The Board of Selectmen voted that the Police Department will not hire a new officer in addition to other budget cuts. The Civil Service policy creates a lead time and the Board will not allow any new hires that the town may need to lay off in the near future.

The discussion included exploring the use of sharing custodial and maintenance positions with both Municipal and School as well as the possibility of out sourcing.

Future discussion for Pay As You Throw by the bag. As of now, nothing has changed and public hearing will educate others.

Agency fee line item will be all that is necessary.

**Adjournment**

Motion: Sue Merrill moved that the public hearing of the Finance Committee be continued.

Seconded: Don Davison. All in favor. Motion carries.

The public hearing adjourned at 9:27 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Fiacco